

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As we continue to address the devastating health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, we urge you to take a worker-centered approach to the next phase of legislation to promote economic relief and recovery. The legislation must protect the essential workers who are keeping the nation moving in our time of crisis.

Property service workers have been declared to be essential in numerous state “stay-at-home” and “shelter-in-place” orders, and for good reason. The duties of property service workers (building cleaners, security officers, residential service workers, contracted airport service workers, cafeteria workers, parking workers, and others) are critically important to keeping the public healthy and our buildings and facilities safe. Property service workers across many sectors act as first responders — meeting the immediate needs of our communities and ensuring the spaces we rely on continue to be clean, safe, and operational.

In order for our nation’s economy to be able to spring back into recovery, it will be important that commercial office buildings, educational facilities, airports, multi-family residential buildings, and other buildings and facilities are fully functioning, sanitary, secure, and in good repair once the health crisis passes. Many property service workers are continuing to do this important work during the crisis because they have been properly designated as essential workers. It is not possible for property service workers to perform their duties remotely and they brave long commutes to fulfill their responsibilities – often without essential personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves and masks. Therefore, the next legislative package must include provisions detailing requirements to provide PPE to these essential workers. We cannot continue to allow them to face the risks associated with continuing to do their work during a pandemic without proper protection and compensation.

At some locations, where operations have ceased or business has slowed, the property service workers are being laid off. These layoffs are devastating to these workers: they face losing their health insurance and their connection to employment. The layoffs will also have a disastrous effect on our ability to get buildings up and running as smoothly and efficiently as possible once the pandemic has passed.

We applaud your efforts to include expanded paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave provisions in previous stimulus legislation, which will help thousands of workers.

Nonetheless, many, including property service workers, will be excluded from key provisions like these due to the size of their employer or other exemptions. Therefore, we ask that the next legislative package prioritize contracted worker-centered economic relief and stimulus efforts.

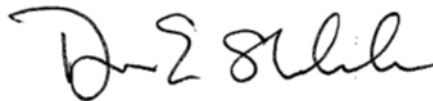
The legislation should include provisions calling for essential pay at 1.5 times their regular rate of pay, supported by payroll tax credits available to employers of essential property service workers. Employers should also be encouraged to keep contracted and subcontracted property service workers on payroll and maintain any health benefits they normally are provided. This can be accomplished by establishing a fund for private sector janitorial and security contractors, modeled on the airline contractor funding in the CARES Act, to maintain wages and healthcare so that these facilities are prepared to quickly get the economy up and running. Further legislation must ensure the airline contractor fund and other contractor funds have sufficient money to keep workers employed with no reduction in compensation. This will also alleviate the strain on overburdened state unemployment insurance programs.

Lastly, we ask that the legislation mandate a worker-industry sectoral bargaining structure for transit hubs receiving assistance, bringing together worker and employer representatives to negotiate important workplace standards, including: wages, health insurance and other benefits, scheduling, training, and staffing levels.

We ask that these measures to protect essential property service workers are given a high priority in the negotiations in the next relief bill.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to supporting our working families through this crisis.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress

JOYCE BEATTY
Member of Congress

AL GREEN
Member of Congress

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-
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Member of Congress

DON BEYER
Member of Congress

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